

UNITED STATES PATENT APPLICATION

FOR

GAMING DEVICE HAVING A MULTIPLE SELECTABLE INDICATOR GAME

INVENTOR:

ANTHONY J. BAERLOCHER

Prepared by:
Bell, Boyd & Lloyd LLC
70 West Madison Street
Suite 3300
Chicago, Illinois 60602
(312) 372-1121
Our File No.: 0112300-1411

S P E C I F I C A T I O N

TITLE OF THE INVENTION

5 **"GAMING DEVICE HAVING A MULTIPLE SELECTABLE INDICATOR
GAME"**

PRIORITY CLAIM

This application is a continuation-in-part of and claims the benefit of U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 10/243,459, filed September 12, 2002.

10

COPYRIGHT NOTICE

A portion of the disclosure of this patent document contains or may contain material which is subject to copyright protection. The copyright owner
15 has no objection to the photocopy reproduction by anyone of the patent document or the patent disclosure in exactly the form it appears in the Patent and Trademark Office patent file or records, but otherwise reserves all copyright rights whatsoever.

20

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a gaming device having multiple selectable indicators.

Gaming device manufacturers strive to make gaming devices that provide as much enjoyment and excitement as possible. Providing a
25 secondary or bonus game in which a player has an opportunity to win potentially large awards or credits in addition to the awards associated with the primary or base game of the gaming device is one known method for enhancing player enjoyment and excitement.

Gaming devices having bonus games generally employ a triggering
30 event that occurs during the operation of the base game of the gaming device. The triggering event temporarily stalls or halts the base game play and enables a player to enter a second, different game, which is the secondary or

bonus game. The player plays the bonus game, likely receives an award, and returns to the base game.

Bonus games exist that employ a wheel including several awards. A player spins the wheel to obtain one or more awards on the wheel. One such 5 bonus game is the "WHEEL OF FORTUNE" gaming device manufactured by the assignee of this application. In this game, a multi-colored award wheel is attached to a gaming device. The award wheel is divided into several sections. Each section includes an award that ranges in value from twenty-five to one thousand. In this game, a player plays a base game that includes 10 spinning reels and a central payline. When the wheel symbol is positioned along the central payline on the third reel, the player enters the bonus game.

In the bonus game, the player obtains one opportunity or spin of the award wheel. The player spins the award wheel by pressing a button on the gaming device. Once the award wheel starts spinning, the player waits until it 15 stops. An indicator located at the top of the award wheel points to a section of the wheel. The player receives the award on the indicated section for the bonus game. After the player receives that award, the bonus game ends and the player may resume playing the base game.

Another bonus game is disclosed in U.S. Patent No. 6,224,483. U.S. 20 Patent No. 6,224,483 discloses a gaming device having a bonus game that initially displays a primary game including several reels with symbols to a player. Multiple paylines are associated with the reels. A bonus game is initiated when the player obtains a specific combination of symbols on the reels. In the bonus game, the player spins a wheel including several awards. 25 The number of spins of the wheel provided to the player is based on the number of paylines that the player played in the primary game, the number of credits wagered on the paylines or a specific symbol combination or combinations on the reels in the primary game. The player spins the wheel in the bonus game and obtains a single award between twenty-five and one 30 thousand credits in each spin. The bonus game ends when the player has no spins remaining. The player receives the total accumulated award from the bonus game.

Gaming devices that increase the opportunities to obtain awards and increase the size of the awards are desirable. Players are attracted to games that provide several larger awards and the opportunity to obtain a very large award. Therefore, to increase player enjoyment and excitement, it is desirable

- 5 to provide new games for gaming devices.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention is directed to a gaming device having a game
10 with an award indicator and in one embodiment, a wheel or other display device with multiple selectable section indicators.

In one embodiment of the gaming device, the award indicator or wheel has a plurality of sections. Each section includes an award symbol which is associated with one or more awards. Also, the gaming device includes a
15 plurality of activatable section indicators which are adapted to indicate sections on the wheel. In one embodiment, the wheel is a mechanical wheel that is attached to the gaming device and the processor of the gaming device causes the wheel to physically spin. In another embodiment, the wheel is in a video format on a video display device of the gaming device. In one
20 embodiment of a game, a player receives only one spin of the wheel. The player spins the wheel (by activating an input) and receives the awards associated with the sections on the wheel which are simultaneously indicated by the activated section indicators. A total award display indicates the total award obtained by the player in the game.

25 In one embodiment, the number of activated section indicators is determined by the player's wager in the base game. In another embodiment, the number of activated section indicators is determined by picking one or more selections from a plurality of selections. Thus, in a game having three section indicators, a number one, a number two and a number three are
30 associated with the selections. The player picks one of the selections provided by the gaming device from the plurality of selections to determine the number of section indicators that will be activated in the game. For example, if

the player picks one selection and that selection reveals the number three, the gaming device activates all three section indicators in the game and thereby simultaneously indicates three awards on the award wheel.

In another embodiment, a plurality of selections are displayed to the player when the game is initiated. The player picks one of the selections to obtain a number of activated section indicators in the game. In one aspect of this embodiment, the player picks selections having either a zero or a one associated with each of the selections. After the player picks a selection, a zero or a one is revealed to the player. If a one is revealed, the gaming device activates one section indicator in the game. If a zero is revealed, the gaming device does not activate one of the section indicators in the game. The player continues to pick selections until there are no picks remaining. The numbers associated with the picked selections are combined or added together to determine the number of activated section indicators for the game. It should be appreciated that the player is preferably not able to obtain a number of activated section indicators in the game that exceeds the maximum number of section indicators in the game unless the game includes multiple spins of the wheel.

In another embodiment, the number of section indicators is determined in a sub-game. One such embodiment of the sub-game includes a plurality of selections and at least one set such as a sequence associated with each section indicator, which are displayed to the player. The selections include symbols that match symbols in each of the sets or sequences. In addition, the selections include section indicator symbols which activate one or more of the section indicators in the game. In one embodiment, the symbols in the sequences are letters and form a word or words such as a phrase. The player picks selections to obtain the letters in each of the sequences. In one embodiment, at least one of the symbols or letters in the sequences in the game include an additional award such as a number of free activations or spins. It should be appreciated that the additional award may be credits, values, bonus awards or any other suitable award.

If a player completes the sequence (i.e., word or phrase) associated with one or more of the section indicators, the gaming device activates that section indicator or section indicators in the game. In one embodiment, the sequences include at least one common symbol where a single pick by a 5 player completes one or more of the sequences in the game. In this embodiment, the gaming device activates one, a plurality or all of the section indicators in the game based on the picks by the player.

The section indicators may also be activated by picking one of the selections including one or more of the corresponding section indicator 10 symbols. In a further embodiment, a multiplier is associated with each sequence. The multipliers begin the sub-game at a predetermined level such as "1X." The multipliers increase by a predetermined or random amount for each revealed symbol in the sequences associated with the multipliers. The player continues to pick selections from a plurality of selections until the player 15 picks one or more of the section indicator symbols, completely reveals all of the symbols in one or more of the sequences or runs out of picks. If the player revealed all of the symbols in one or more of the sequences or the player picked one or more of the section indicator symbols, the gaming device activates those section indicators in the game.

20 In one such game, the player receives a number of spins or activations of the wheel. The gaming device causes the wheel to spin and the activated section indicators indicate sections on the wheel. The player obtains a cumulative award which equals the awards indicated by each of the activated section indicators multiplied by the multiplier associated with the activated 25 section indicators. The multiplied awards are summed together and provided to the player as the total award for the game. The player continues to spin the wheel and obtain awards until the player does not have any spins remaining. The game ends and the player obtains the total award indicated in the total award display.

30 In a further embodiment, the present invention is employed in a primary game. In one such embodiment, the primary game includes a plurality of reels. The reels include a plurality of symbols and section indicator symbols

which represent a number of activated section indicators in a bonus game. The processor of the gaming device causes the reels to spin, and activates the section indicators in the bonus game according to the number of section indicator symbols that appear on the reels. The section indicator symbols may

5 indicate specific section indicators to activate in the bonus game or indicate the total number of section indicators to activate in the bonus game. In another embodiment, the section indicator symbols on the reels include a number which corresponds to a number of activated section indicators. The player spins the reels and attempts to obtain one or more of the section

10 indicator symbols located on the reels. The gaming device activates the number of section indicators corresponding to the largest number on the section indicator symbols. In a further embodiment, the primary game includes a plurality of selections as described above. The player picks the selections to activate one or more section indicators in the bonus game. In

15 another embodiment, a specific combination of symbols on the reels is associated with the section indicators in a game. The gaming device spins the reels and activates any of the section indicators based on the specific combinations of symbols indicated on the reels.

In another embodiment, the section indicators each include a different

20 color or colors. The gaming device displays a plurality of reels including a plurality of activator symbols, each of the activator symbols including one of the colors associated with each of the section indicators. The gaming device or player spins the reels and the gaming device activates one or more of the section indicators based on the activator symbol or symbols that occur on the

25 reels. For example, if a blue activator symbol is indicated on the reels, the gaming device activates the section indicator including the color blue.

In a further embodiment, each of the reels includes a color corresponding to a color associated with the section indicators. Each of the reels also includes at least one activator symbol. The gaming device or player

30 activates the reels to indicate one or more symbols on the reels. Then, the gaming device activates the section indicators based on which reels the activator symbols are indicated on in the game. For example, a game

includes three reels, a blue reel, a red reel and a yellow reel, which respectively correspond to a blue, red and yellow section indicator in the game. The blue section indicator is activated when at least one activator symbol is indicated on the blue reel. The red section indicator is activated

5 when at least one activator symbol is indicated on the red reel. The yellow section indicator is activated when at least one activator symbol is indicated on the yellow reel. It should be appreciated that the symbols and or reels may include one or more colors or one or more combinations of colors.

In another embodiment, at least one puzzle is associated with the

10 section indicators in a game. In this embodiment, the gaming device activates the section indicator or indicators associated with the puzzle or puzzle completed by the player in the game. In another embodiment, the gaming device displays a single puzzle having multiple components to the player. One or more of the components are associated with the section indicators.

15 Therefore, the gaming device activates the sections indicators based on which components and/or the number of components of the puzzle completed by the player in the game. It should be appreciated that any number of components and/or puzzles may be employed in a game.

In a further embodiment, one or more puzzles such as the sequences

20 described above are employed in a persistence game. In this type of game, the player picks symbols such as letters in one or more of the sequences. The picked symbols remain revealed for a designated number of games. Thus, one player may complete one or more of the sequences during the designated number of games. Additionally, one player may pick and reveal

25 symbols in one or more of the sequences in one game and a subsequent player or players may complete the sequence or sequences in a subsequent game or games.

In an alternative embodiment of the present invention, the gaming device displays an award indicator or award display device to a player. The

30 award indicator or display includes a plurality of award symbols. A plurality of activatable symbol indicators are positioned adjacent to and associated with the award symbols. The gaming device enables the player to interact with the

game by allowing the player to pick at least two of the symbol indicators on the award indicator to activate the picked symbol indicators. Once the symbol indicators are activated, the gaming device causes the award indicator or display to move to indicate award symbols with the activated symbol

5 indicators. The awards associated with the indicated award symbols are provided to the player and the game ends. Therefore, the gaming device of the present invention enables a player to obtain multiple awards in a single activation of the award indicator which increases the player's excitement and enjoyment of the game. Additionally, the player has an opportunity to obtain a

10 large award in the game which further increases the player's excitement and enjoyment of the game.

In one alternative embodiment, the gaming device includes a rotatable mechanical award indicator such as a sphere or ball which is rotatably connected to and moves relative to a housing attached to the top of the

15 cabinet of the gaming device. The award indicator includes a plurality of award symbols and a plurality of activatable symbol indicators which indicate one or more of the award symbols and provide associated awards to a player. In one embodiment, the award indicator or display includes two sets of award symbols. A first set of the award symbols is positioned near the top or upper

20 portion of the award indicator and a second set of the award symbols is positioned near the bottom or lower portion of the award indicator. A plurality of activatable symbol indicators are positioned adjacent to or associated with each set of award symbols on the award indicator.

In one embodiment, a plurality of awards are associated with each set

25 of the award symbols. In one aspect of this embodiment, at least one of the awards associated with the sets of award symbols are the same. In another aspect of this embodiment, a plurality of the awards associated with the sets of award symbols are the same. In a further aspect of this embodiment, all of the awards associated with the sets of award symbols are the same. In

30 another embodiment, all of the awards associated with the sets of award symbols are different. It should be appreciated that the awards may be

values, prizes, modifiers, free spins, free games, game elements or any other suitable award or awards in a game.

In one embodiment, one or more of the symbol indicators associated with each set of award symbols are selected and activated to indicate one or 5 more of the award symbols in each of the sets. In one embodiment, the gaming device selects and activates at least one of the symbol indicators in each set. In another embodiment, the gaming device enables the player to select and activate one or more symbol indicators in each set. In one aspect of this embodiment, the gaming device enables the player to press or 10 otherwise activate the symbol indicators on the award indicator. In another aspect of this embodiment, the gaming device provides a selection display which includes a plurality of first and second inputs associated with the first and second symbol indicators on the award indicator. The player picks at least one of the first inputs and at least one of the second inputs to activate or 15 otherwise highlight the corresponding first symbol indicator and second symbol indicator on the award indicator in the game. In a further embodiment, the symbol indicators are activated based on a wager made by the player. It should be appreciated that the symbol indicators may be randomly selected and activated, pre-selected and activated or selected and activated according 20 to any suitable method. The symbol indicators may be pointers, arrows or any other suitable indicator or indicators desired by the game implementor. It should also be appreciated that any suitable number of symbol indicators may be activated in a game.

In one embodiment, the gaming device enables a player to pick one of 25 the symbol indicators from each set of symbol indicators in the game. The gaming device activates or otherwise highlights the picked symbol indicators and rotates the award indicator. When the award indicator stops rotating, the activated symbol indicators indicate one of the award symbols in each of the sets of award symbols in the game. The gaming device then provides a first 30 award associated with the indicated award symbol in the upper set of award symbols and a second award associated with the indicated award symbol in the lower set of award symbols. In one embodiment, the first and second

awards are values and the gaming device sums or adds the awards or values together to provide a total award to the player for the game. In another embodiment, the awards are values and the gaming device multiplies the first award and the second award together to provide a total award to the player in 5 the game. It should be appreciated that the first awards and/or the second awards may be values, modifiers, free spins, free games or any other suitable type of awards or modifiers in the game.

In one alternative embodiment, the first and second award symbols on the award indicator include at least one bonus symbol. If the bonus symbol is 10 indicated by an activated first symbol indicator or an activated second symbol indicator, the gaming device provides at least one free spin or activation of the award indicator in the game. This enables a player to obtain additional activations or spins of the award indicator and thereby additional awards in the game. If the activated symbol indicators in a game indicate a bonus symbol 15 and an award such as a value, the gaming device provides the award to the player and at least one free spin or activation of the award indicator in the game. It should be appreciated that the bonus symbols may be any suitable symbols or images desired by the game implementor. It should be appreciated that the first and second award symbols may include one or a 20 plurality of bonus symbols in a game.

In another alternative embodiment, the first awards associated with the first award symbols are values and the second awards associated with the second award symbols are different awards such as modifiers. In this embodiment, the gaming device modifies the value associated with the 25 indicated first award symbol with the modifier associated with the indicated second award symbol to provide a total award to a player in a game. It should be appreciated that the awards may be values, prizes, modifiers, free spins, free games, game elements or any suitable award or awards.

In a further alternative embodiment, the gaming device includes a 30 plurality of award indicators. In one aspect of this embodiment, each award indicator includes a plurality of award symbols and a plurality of symbol indicators positioned adjacent to the award symbols on each of the award

indicators. In one embodiment, each award indicator independently rotates and the activated symbol indicators on each of the award indicators indicates an award symbol on each award indicator. The awards associated with the indicated award symbols are combined and provided to the player as a total
5 award indicated by a total award display.

In one embodiment, at least one of the awards associated with the award symbols on each of the award indicators is the same. In another embodiment, a plurality of the awards associated with the award symbols on each of the award indicators are the same. In a further embodiment, all of the
10 awards associated with the award symbols on all of the award indicators are the same. In another embodiment, the awards associated with the award symbols on each of the award indicators are different. For example, on one award indicator, the awards associated with the award symbols include values and on a different award indicator, the awards associated with the award
15 symbols are modifiers such as multipliers. It should be appreciated that any suitable award may be associated with the award symbols on each of the award indicators and any suitable combination of awards may be associated with the award symbols on each of the award indicators.

In another embodiment, the first and second award symbols are related
20 to each other. In this embodiment, the first and second award symbols are arranged or positioned on the award indicator so that the average expected award provided to the player (i.e, the combination of the first and second awards associated with indicated first and second award symbols) is approximately the same in a game. In another embodiment, the first and
25 second award symbols are arranged on the award indicator so that the average expected award is different for one or more indications of the first and second award symbols in the game. It should be appreciated that the average expected award may be the same or change in a single game or a plurality of games.

30 It is therefore an advantage of the present invention to provide a gaming device having an award indicator such as an award wheel with multiple section indicators that provides more awards to players.

Another advantage of the present invention is to provide a gaming device having multiple player selectable symbol indicators.

Other objects, features and advantages of the invention will be apparent from the following detailed disclosure, taken in conjunction with the accompanying sheets of drawings, wherein like numerals refer to like parts, elements, components, steps and processes.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1A is a front perspective view of one embodiment of the gaming device of the present invention.

Fig. 1B is a front perspective of another embodiment of the gaming device of the present invention.

Fig. 2 is a schematic block diagram of the electronic configuration of one embodiment of the gaming device of the present invention.

Fig. 3 is an enlarged front elevation view of one of the display devices of Figs. 1A and 1B illustrating one embodiment of the present invention.

Fig. 4 is an enlarged front elevation view of one of the display devices of Figs. 1A and 1B illustrating an example of the embodiment of Fig. 3 where three activated section indicators indicate different sections on an award wheel.

Figs. 5A and 5B are schematic diagrams illustrating embodiments of the present invention where the number of activated section indicators employed in a game is based on a plurality of selections.

Fig. 6 illustrates another embodiment of the present invention where the number of activated section indicators and associated multipliers are determined in a sub-game.

Figs. 7A, 7B and 7C are enlarged front elevation views of one of the display devices of Figs. 1A and 1B illustrating an example of the embodiment of Fig. 6 where a player picks three selections from the plurality of selections.

Fig. 7D is an enlarged front elevation view of one of the display devices of Figs. 1A and 1B illustrating an award wheel where the number of activated

section indicators is based on the selections picked by the player in Figs. 7A to 7C.

Fig. 8A is an enlarged front elevation view of one of the display devices of Figs. 1A and 1B illustrating an alternative embodiment of the present invention.

Fig. 8B is an enlarged front elevation view illustrating an example of the embodiment of Fig. 8A.

Fig. 8C is an enlarged front elevation view illustrating another alternative embodiment of the present invention where the gaming device includes a selection display which enables a player to pick and activate the symbol indicators in a game.

Fig. 9 is an enlarged front elevation view of one of the display devices of Figs. 1A and 1B illustrating a further alternative embodiment of the present invention where the award symbols on the award indicator include bonus symbols.

Fig. 10 is an enlarged front elevation view of one of the display devices of Figs. 1A and 1B illustrating another alternative embodiment of the present invention where the award indicator includes movable symbol indicators.

Fig. 11 is an enlarged front elevation view of one of the display devices of Figs. 1A and 1B illustrating a further alternative embodiment of the present invention where different award symbols are included on the award indicator.

Fig. 12 is an enlarged front elevation view of one of the display devices of Figs. 1A and 1B illustrating another alternative embodiment of the present invention including a plurality of award indicators.

Fig. 13 is an enlarged elevation view of one of the display devices of Figs. 1A and 1B illustrating a further alternative embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Gaming Device and Electronics

Referring now to the drawings, two embodiments of the gaming device of the present invention are illustrated in Figs. 1A and 1B as gaming device 10a and gaming device 10b, respectively. Gaming device 10a and/or gaming device 10b are generally referred to herein as gaming device 10. Gaming device 10 in one embodiment has the controls, displays and features of a conventional slot machine. It is constructed so that a player can operate it while standing or sitting, and gaming device 10 is preferably mounted in a cabinet. However, it should be appreciated that gaming device 10 can be constructed as a pub-style table-top game (not shown) which a player can operate preferably while sitting. Furthermore, gaming device 10 can be constructed with varying cabinet and display designs, as illustrated by the designs shown in Figs. 1A and 1B. Gaming device 10 can also be implemented as a program code stored in a detachable cartridge for operating a hand-held video game device. Also, gaming device 10 can be implemented as a program code stored on a disk or other memory device which a player can use in a desktop or laptop personal computer or other computerized platform.

20 Gaming device 10 can incorporate any primary game such as slot, poker, blackjack or keno, and any of the bonus triggering events and bonus games associated with these primary games. The symbols and indicia used on and in gaming device 10 may be in mechanical, electrical, electronic or video form.

25 As illustrated in Figs. 1A and 1B, gaming device 10 includes a coin slot 12 and bill acceptor 14 where the player inserts money, coins or tokens. The player can place coins in the coin slot 12 or paper money or ticket vouchers in the bill acceptor 14. Other devices could be used for accepting payment such as readers or validators for credit cards or debit cards. When a player inserts 30 money in gaming device 10, a number of credits corresponding to the amount deposited is shown in a credit display 16. After depositing the appropriate

amount of money, a player can begin the game by pulling arm 17 or pushing play button 20. Play button 20 can be any play activator used by the player which starts any game or sequence of events in the gaming device.

As shown in Figs. 1A and 1B, gaming device 10 also includes a bet display 22 and a bet one button 24. The player places a bet by pushing the bet one button 24. The player can increase the bet by one credit each time the player pushes the bet one button 24. When the player pushes the bet one button 24, the number of credits shown in the credit display 16 decreases by one, and the number of credits shown in the bet display 22 increases by one.

10 Other bet or wager indicators such as a bet max button may also be employed in the gaming device of present invention.

A player may cash out and thereby receive a number of coins corresponding to the number of remaining credits by pushing a cash out button 26. When the player cashes out, the player receives the coins in a coin payout tray 28. The gaming device 10 may employ other payout mechanisms such as credit slips redeemable by a cashier or electronically recordable cards which keep track of the player's credits.

Gaming device 10 also includes one or more display devices. The embodiment shown in Fig. 1A includes a central display device 30 and a mechanical wheel 100, and the alternative embodiment shown in Fig. 1B includes a central display device 30 as well as an upper display device 32 which displays a video image of the wheel 100 to a player. Gaming device 10 in one embodiment displays a plurality of reels 34 such as three to five reels 34 in mechanical or video form at one or more of the display devices.

25 However, it should be appreciated that the display devices can display any visual representation or exhibition, including but not limited to movement of physical objects such as mechanical reels and wheels, dynamic lighting and video images. A display device can be any viewing surface such as glass, a video monitor or screen, a liquid crystal display or any other display mechanism. If the reels 34 are in video form, the display device for the video reels 34 is preferably a video monitor. Each reel 34 displays a plurality of indicia such as bells, hearts, fruits, numbers, letters, bars or other images

which preferably correspond to a theme associated with the gaming device 10. Furthermore, gaming device 10 preferably includes speakers 36 for producing sounds such as music.

As illustrated in Fig. 2, the general electronic configuration of gaming device 10 preferably includes: a processor 38; a memory device 40 for storing program code or other data; a central display device 30; an upper display device 32; a mechanical wheel 100; a sound card 42; a plurality of speakers 36; and one or more input devices 44. The processor 38 is preferably a microprocessor or microcontroller-based platform which is capable of displaying images, symbols and other indicia such as images of people, characters, places, things and faces of cards. One or more secondary processors may also be employed in conjunction with the primary processor to control certain aspects of the game function. The memory device 40 can include random access memory (RAM) 46 for storing event data or other data generated or used during a particular game. The memory device 40 can also include read only memory (ROM) 48 for storing program code which controls the gaming device 10 so that it plays a particular game in accordance with applicable game rules and pay tables.

As illustrated in Fig. 2, the player preferably uses the input devices 44, such as pull arm 17, play button 20, the bet one button 24 and the cash out button 26 to input signals into gaming device 10. In certain instances it is preferable to use a touch screen 50 and an associated touch screen controller 52 instead of a conventional video monitor display device. Touch screen 50 and touch screen controller 52 are connected to a video controller 54 and processor 38. A player can make decisions and input signals into the gaming device 10 by touching touch screen 50 at the appropriate places. As further illustrated in Fig. 2, the processor 38 can be connected to coin slot 12 or bill acceptor 14. The processor 38 can be programmed to require a player to deposit a certain amount of money in order to start the game.

It should be appreciated that although a processor 38 and memory device 40 are preferable implementations of the present invention, the present invention can also be implemented using one or more application-specific

integrated circuits (ASIC's) or other hard-wired devices, or using mechanical devices (collectively or alternatively referred to herein as a "processor"). Furthermore, although the processor 38 and memory device 40 preferably reside on each gaming device 10 unit, it is possible to provide some or all of

5 their functions at a central location such as a network server for communication to a playing station such as over a local area network (LAN), wide area network (WAN), Internet connection, microwave link, and the like. The processor 38 and memory device 40 are generally referred to herein as the "computer" or "controller."

10 With reference to Figs. 1A, 1B and 2, to operate the gaming device 10, in one embodiment the player must insert the appropriate amount of money or tokens at coin slot 12 or bill acceptor 14 and then pull the arm 17 or push the play button 20. The reels 34 will then begin to spin. Eventually, the reels 34 will come to a stop. As long as the player has credits remaining, the player

15 can spin the reels 34 again. Depending upon where the reels 34 stop, the player may or may not win additional credits.

In addition to winning credits in this manner, in one embodiment gaming device 10 also gives players the opportunity to win credits in a bonus game. This type of gaming device 10 will include a program which will automatically

20 begins a bonus game when the player has achieved a qualifying condition in the game. This qualifying condition can be a particular arrangement of indicia on a display device. The gaming device 10 may use mechanical devices or a video-based central display device 30 to enable the player to play the bonus game. In one embodiment, the qualifying condition is a predetermined

25 combination of indicia appearing on a plurality of reels 34. As illustrated in the five reel slot game shown in Figs. 1A and 1B, the qualifying condition could be the number seven appearing on three adjacent reels 34 along a payline 56. It should be appreciated that the present invention can include one or more paylines, such as payline 56, wherein the paylines can be horizontal, diagonal

30 or any combination thereof.

Bonus Game

In one embodiment of the present invention, if a player achieves a bonus triggering or qualifying condition during the primary game, the gaming device 10 initiates the secondary or bonus game of the present invention.

- 5 Referring now to Fig. 3, one embodiment of the present invention is illustrated where the bonus game includes a mechanical or video wheel 100 having a plurality of sections 102. An award symbol 104 is associated with each section 102. One or more awards are associated with the award symbols 104. The awards may be any suitable award such as values, credits,
- 10 free spins, free games, multipliers or award opportunities as desired by the game implementor. The gaming device includes a plurality of award indicators such as section indicators 106, 108 and 110, designated by the letters A, B and C, respectively, which are associated with the wheel 100. It should be appreciated that the indicators 106, 108 and 110 may be designated by colors,
- 15 characters, numbers, images or any suitable designator. Each section indicator is adapted to indicate one of the sections 102 on the wheel 100. In one embodiment, the wheel rotates in a counter clockwise direction as indicated by arrow 112 in Fig. 3. It should be appreciated, however, that the wheel may rotate in a clockwise direction, a counter clockwise direction, or any
- 20 combination therein. It should also be appreciated that the wheel may remain stationary and the section indicators may move about the wheel or both the wheel and the section indicators may move in the same direction or different directions. A total award display 114 indicates the total award obtained by the player in the game. The total award displayed in the total award display 114 at
- 25 the end of the game is the total award provided to the player for the game.

Referring to Fig. 4, in one embodiment, the gaming device activates a predetermined number of section indicators at the start of the game. In another embodiment, the gaming device activates a random number of section indicators. In a further embodiment, the player's wager in the base game or primary game determines the number of section indicators that are activated in the game. In Fig. 4, the gaming device activates all three of the section indicators A, B and C, or 106, 108 and 110, respectively which are

provided in the game. Each activated section indicator is adapted to indicate a section 102 on the wheel 100. In this embodiment, the player has one spin in the game. The player receives the awards associated with the award symbols indicated by the activated section indicators 106, 108 and 110. It 5 should be appreciated, however, that the gaming device may provide multiple spins in the game.

In Fig. 4, the gaming device activates or spins the wheel 100. When the wheel stops spinning, the activated section indicators 106, 108 and 110 indicate sections on the wheel having awards of twenty-five, fifty and seventy-10 five, respectively. The awards are added or summed to provide the total award for the game to the player. In this example, the total award indicated by the activated section indicators 106, 108 and 110 is one hundred fifty. The award of one hundred fifty is transferred to the total award display 114 and is provided to the player in the game. It should be appreciated that the awards 15 may be summed, multiplied, or modified in any other suitable manner desired by the game implementor.

In another embodiment, illustrated in Figs. 5A and 5B, a plurality of masked selections are displayed to the player prior to or at the start of the game. The gaming device enables the player to pick one or more of the 20 masked or hidden selections to determine and activate a number of section indicators in the bonus game.

Referring to Fig. 5A, the plurality of selections 116a include selections 117a. Numbers such as integers "1," "2" and "3" are randomly associated with the selections 117a and represent the number of activated section indicators in 25 a game. It should be appreciated that the value of the largest integer associated with the selections is equal to or less than the maximum number of section indicators in a game. Initially, the selections 117a are masked or hidden from the player. The player is provided with a number of picks from the selections 117a to pick a number of section indicators to activate in the 30 game. In one embodiment, the player is provided with one selection from the selections 116a. The player may activate "1", "2" or "3" section indicators as illustrated in Fig. 5A. In one example, the player receives one pick from the

plurality of selections 116a. If the player picks selection 117a, which reveals the number “2,” the gaming device activates two of the section indicators in the game. In another example, if the player picks a selection 117a, which reveals the number “3,” the gaming device activates three of the section indicators in 5 the game. It should be appreciated may activate specific indicators or randomly activate one or more of the section indicators.

Referring now to Fig. 5B, the plurality of selections 116b includes symbols such as numbers “0” and “1”. The player receives a number of picks to pick the selections. When the player picks one of the selections, one of the 10 numbers such as the “0” or “1,” is revealed and displayed to the player. The sum of the numbers associated with the picked selections equals the number of activated section indicators provided to the player in the game. In one embodiment, the sum of the numbers associated with the selections is greater than the number of possible section indicators in the game. In this 15 embodiment, the player has a greater chance of activating the maximum number of section indicators in the game.

In Fig. 5B, the player can activate up to three section indicators in the game. Therefore, the player may obtain “0,” “1,” “2” or “3” activated section indicators in the game after picking one or more of the selections. If the player 20 picks a selection 117b, which reveals the number “1,” the gaming device activates one of the section indicators in the game. Subsequently, if the player picks two of the other selections 117b where both picked selections reveal the number “1,” the player receives the total or sum of the numbers associated with the picked selections, which is three. Thus, the gaming device 25 activates the maximum number of section indicators (i.e., three) in the game. It should be appreciated that the player may pick and the gaming device may activate any number of section indicators depending on the numbers associated with the selections. It should also be appreciated that a plurality of symbols may be used to represent the numbers of activated section indicators 30 in the selections wherein a player picks a selection having a symbol and receives the number of activated section indicators associated with the picked symbol.

In another embodiment illustrated in Fig. 6, the number of activated section indicators is determined in a sub-game. In one such sub-game, the gaming device displays a set such as a sequence or sequences 130, 132 and 134 and a plurality of selections 136 to the player. In the illustrated embodiment, each section indicator 106, 108 and 110 has an associated set or sequence 130, 132 and 134, respectively. Each sequence includes symbols such as letters, numbers or any other desired character or symbol. In this embodiment, the symbols are letters which form a word or phrase. The letters in the sequences are initially masked or hidden from the player. In one embodiment, the player picks symbols such as letters to complete one or more of the sequences. The gaming device then activates the section indicator or section indicators associated with the completed sequence or sequences. In this embodiment, the sequences include one or more common symbols where a single pick of the symbols in one of the sequences completes one, two or more of the sequences in the game. Thus, a single pick activates one or more of the section indicators in the game.

The selections include several symbols where some of the symbols are letters such as the letter "T" indicated in selection 138 or the letter "N" indicated in selection 142. The other selections include indicator symbols such as section indicator symbols which activate one or more of the section indicators 106, 108 and 110 in the game. Therefore, one of the selections includes a section indicator symbol which activates the section indicator 106. Another of the selections includes section indicator symbol which activates the section indicator 108, and another selection includes section indicator symbol which activates the section indicator 110. Furthermore, three of the selections include combinations of the section indicator symbols which activate one or more of the section indicators 106, 108 and 110 in the game. In one selection, the section indicator symbols which activate the section indicators 106 and 108 are paired together. In another selection, the section indicator symbols which activate the section indicator symbols 106 and 110 are paired together. In a further selection, section indicator symbols which activate the section indicators 108 and 110 are paired together. In a final selection all

three of the section indicator symbols are grouped together. It should be appreciated that the selections 136 are initially masked or hidden from the player so that the player does not know where a particular letter or section indicator symbol is located in the plurality of selections 136. The symbols 5 associated with the selections 136 are revealed to the player when the player picks the selections.

In the sub-game illustrated in Fig. 6, the player picks selections 136 to reveal a matching letter or letters in one or more of the sequences.

In one embodiment, the gaming device includes a symbol or letter 10 selector which enables a player to select one or more of the letters in the sequences. The letter selector may be a set of buttons that correspond to each of the letters in the sequences or a plurality of selections that include the letters in the sequences as described above.

In another embodiment, some of the letters in each sequence are 15 initially revealed to the player. The player then must attempt to pick selections 136 that reveal the remaining letters in each of the sequences.

In one embodiment, a multiplier is associated with each of the section indicators. The multipliers change in value based on the letters that are revealed in the sequences. A multiplier display is associated with each 20 section indicator. Therefore in Fig. 6, multiplier A display 144a is associated with section indicator A (106), multiplier B display 146a is associated with section indicator B (108) and multiplier C display 148a is associated with section indicator C (110). The multiplier displays 144a, 146a and 148a indicate the value of the multiplier associated with each of the section 25 indicators 106, 108 and 110, respectively, during the sub-game. In one embodiment, the value of the multiplier associated with each section indicator increases by one for each letter picked by the player from the plurality of selections 136 that match one of the letters in the corresponding sequences 130, 132 or 134, respectively. The multipliers may increase by a 30 predetermined or random amount for each matched letter. It should be appreciated that the multipliers may also decrease by any amount or remain unchanged. For example in Fig. 6, if a player picks the selection that reveals

the letter "P," which is associated with sequence 132, the multiplier displayed in the multiplier B display 146a increases from "1X" to "2X." If the player picks another letter from the selections 136 that matches one of the letters in the sequence 132, the multiplier increases by one again to "3X." In one

5 embodiment, each letter associated with the plurality of selections is associated with one of the sequences 130, 132 and 134. Therefore, in this embodiment, the player can only increase the multiplier associated with one of the section indicators 106, 108 and 110 with each pick. In another embodiment, a letter may be associated with one or more of the sequences.

10 In this embodiment, one of the picked letters may increase the multiplier associated with one or more of the sequences associated with the section indicators.

Additionally, in one embodiment, one or more of the symbols or letters includes an additional award such as a number of free spins of the award

15 indicator, credits, values or any suitable award or values. The gaming device provides the additional award to the player when the player picks the symbol or symbol in the game.

In the sub-game illustrated in Fig. 6., if the player picks a selection 136 that reveals one or more section indicator symbols, the gaming device

20 activates the section indicators associated with those section indicator symbols in the game. For example, if the player picks a selection having section indicator symbols associated with section indicators 106 and 108, then the gaming device activates the section indicators 106 and 108 in the game. The gaming device does not activate section indicator 110 in the game

25 because as of that point in the game, the player did not pick the selection having the section indicator symbol associated with section indicator 110. Similarly, if the player picks the selection including all three section indicator symbols associated with section indicators 106, 108 and 110, then the gaming device activates the maximum number of section indicators in the game, which

30 in this example is three. Once the player picks a selection that reveals one or more section indicator symbols, the gaming device activates the section indicators associated with those symbols and the game initiates. In the game,

the gaming device or the player spins the wheel illustrated in Fig. 4, having the number of activated section indicators associated with the section indicator symbols picked by the player. The awards associated with the award symbols on the indicated sections are multiplied by the multipliers associated with the

5 activated section indicators. The multiplied awards are summed or added together and provided to the player at the end of the game.

Referring now to Figs. 7A to 7D, an example of the embodiment of Fig. 6 is illustrated where the player is provided with a plurality of masked or hidden selections 136. In this example, the multipliers associated with section 10 indicators 106, 108 and 110 are initially at "1X." It should be appreciated that the multipliers may start at any value and may be different values. Also, the sequences 130, 132 and 134 include a plurality of letters which form the words "BUCKET," "TEARDROP" and "SQUEEZE." However, the words may be any words or other symbol combinations desired by the game implementor.

15 In Fig. 7A, the player picks selection 150 from the plurality of selections 136 with their first pick. The selection 150 reveals the letter "D." The letter "D" is only associated with sequence 132. Thus, the letter "D" is revealed in sequence 132 and the multiplier associated with section indicator 108, which is displayed in Multiplier "B" Display 146a, is increased by one from "1X" to 20 "2X." The player continues to pick selections from the plurality of selections 136 until the player picks a selection that reveals one or more section indicator symbols.

In Fig. 7B, the player picks a second selection from the plurality of 25 selections 136. The player picks selection 154, which reveals the letter "Q." The letter "Q" is associated with sequence 134 and only appears once in that sequence. As a result, the multiplier displayed in Multiplier C Display 148a, which is associated with section indicator 110, is increased by one from "1X" to "2X." Since the player did not pick a selection including one or more section indicator symbols, the player continues to pick selections from the plurality of 30 selections 136.

In Fig. 7C, the player picks a third selection, selection 158, from the plurality of selections 136. Selection 158 reveals three section indicator

symbols. The section indicator symbols are associated with section indicators 106, 108 and 110. Therefore, the gaming device activates the maximum number of section indicators in the game. In one embodiment, the section indicator symbols are not associated with any additional awards. In another 5 embodiment, each section indicator symbol or all of the section indicator symbols are associated with one or more additional awards, which are provided to the player when the player picks the selection associated with one or more of the section indicator symbols. In this example, the player only obtains the lowest multiplier value (i.e., 1X) for section indicator symbol 106 as 10 indicated by Multiplier A Display 144a. However, the player did pick a selection that revealed one letter in the sequences 132 and 134, which are associated with section indicators 108 and 110, respectively. Thus, the player obtained a multiplier of "2X" for section indicators 108 and 110, as indicated by Multiplier B Display 146a and Multiplier C Display 148a.

15 In the game, the gaming device activates all three section indicators and provides the player with one spin. The player spins the wheel and receives the awards associated with the sections indicated by the activated section indicators 106, 108 and 110 in that spin. Furthermore, the award associated with each section indicated by the activated section indicators 106, 20 108 and 110 is multiplied by the multipliers associated with those section indicators as displayed by Multiplier A Display 144a, Multiplier B Display 146a, and Multiplier C Display 148a. Thus, the award indicated by section indicator 106 will be multiplied by "1X" as indicated in the Multiplier A Display 144a, the award indicated by indicator 108 will be multiplied by "2X" as indicated in 25 Multiplier B Display 146a and the award indicated by section indicator 110 will be multiplied by "2X" as indicated by Multiplier C Display 148a.

Referring now to Fig. 7D, the gaming device initiates the bonus game and displays a wheel 100 having a plurality of sections 102. Several award symbols 104 are associated with sections 102. Because the player obtained 30 all three section indicators 106, 108 and 110 in the sub-game, the gaming device activates all three section indicators, such as by illuminating or highlighting the activated section indicators, to show that all three section

indicators are activated for the game. If the player only obtained two of the section indicators in the sub-game, only those two section indicators obtained by the player are activated for the game. The wheel 100 rotates in a clockwise direction as shown by arrow 112. Also, the gaming device displays a multiplier

5 display associated with each section indicator. Multiplier A Display 144b is associated with section indicator A (106). Multiplier B Display 146b is associated with section indicator B (108). Multiplier C Display 148b is associated with section indicator C (110). In addition, a total award display 114 displays or indicates the total award accumulated by the player in the

10 game.

In the game illustrated in Fig. 7D, the gaming device or the player spins the wheel 100. When the wheel stops spinning, the activated section indicators 106, 108 and 110 indicate sections including award symbols with awards of ten, twenty-five and twenty-five, respectively. Thus, the award

15 associated with section indicator 106, which is ten, is multiplied by the multiplier associated with the section indicator 106 and indicated by Multiplier A Display 144b, which is "1X." The award indicated by section indicator 108, which is twenty-five, is multiplied by the multiplier associated with the section indicator 108 and indicated in Multiplier B Display 146b, which is "2X." The

20 award indicated by section indicator 110, which is twenty-five, is multiplied by the multiplier associated with the section indicator 110 and indicated in Multiplier C Display 148b, which is "2X." Thus, the awards indicated by section indicators 106, 108 and 110 are modified or multiplied by the corresponding multipliers to become awards of ten, fifty and fifty, respectively.

25 The awards are added or summed together to provide the total award of one hundred ten as indicated by total award display 114. The player receives the total award of one hundred ten for the game.

In a further embodiment, the present invention is employed as a primary game. In one such primary game, the number of activated section

30 indicators may be determined on a plurality of reels, from a plurality of selections or in any suitable game. In one such primary game, the number of section indicators activated in a subsequent game such as the bonus game

are determined by a plurality of reels. The reels include one or more section indicator symbols or activator symbols. The gaming device or the player spins the reels and the gaming device activates the section indicators based on the number of the section indicator symbols that appear on the reels. For 5 example, if two section indicator symbols appear on the reels, the gaming device activates two section indicator symbols in a subsequent game. It should be appreciated that the number of section indicator symbols included on the reels equals or is less than the maximum number of section indicators available in the subsequent game such as the bonus game.

10 In another embodiment of the above primary game, the section indicator symbols include numbers such as integers which represent a number of section indicators to activate in a subsequent game. For example, the section indicators may include the numbers "1", "2" and "3". The gaming device or player spins the reels and the gaming device activates the number of 15 section indicators associated with the section indicator symbol having the greatest number associated with it which appears on the reels. In a further aspect of this embodiment, a plurality of selections are displayed to the player in the primary game and the player picks selections as described above to obtain a number of activated section indicators in a subsequent game. It 20 should be appreciated that any suitable number of section indicators may be activated in a game where the number of activated section indicators is equal to or less than the number associated with the section indicator symbol or symbols that occur on the reels.

In another embodiment, each of the section indicators in a game are 25 associated with a specific combination of symbols on the reels. The gaming device spins the reels and activates one or more of the section indicators when the specific combination or combinations of symbols associated with the section indicators are indicated on the reels. For example, a game includes two section indicators designated by the letters A and B. Section indicator A is 30 activated when two A symbols occur on the reels. Section indicator B is activated when three B symbols appear on the reels. The gaming device

spins the reels and two A symbols are indicated or occur on the reels. Thus, the gaming device activates section indicator A in the game.

In a further aspect of this embodiment, the section indicators include different colors such as red, blue and green. It should be appreciated that the 5 section indicators may include any suitable color or combination of colors in a game. It should also be appreciated that the section indicators may be designated by colors, numbers, characters, symbols, images or any suitable designator. In this embodiment, each section indicator includes a different color and the reels include activator symbols including each of the different 10 colors. Thus, one or more of the section indicators are activated when one or more of the colors or activator symbols including the colors corresponding to the section indicators are indicated on the reels as described above. It should be appreciated that the section indicators may be activated based on a combination of one or more symbols including the same color or different 15 colors in a game.

In a further embodiment, the reels include a plurality of symbols and are designated by one or more colors corresponding to the colors associated with each of the section indicators in a game. In this embodiment, the gaming device activates a section indicator when one or more activator symbols occur 20 on the reel including the color associated with the section indicator. For example, the section indicator including the color red is activated when one or more designated activator symbols occur on the reel including the color red. It should be appreciated that one or more reels may be employed in a game and the reels may include one or more colors or color combinations as desired by 25 the game implementor.

In another embodiment, one or more puzzles are associated with the section indicators. The gaming device enables a player to solve or complete the puzzle or puzzles to activate one or more of the section indicators. In one aspect of this embodiment, one puzzle is associated with each of the section 30 indicators in a game. The gaming device activates one or more of the section indicators when the player solves or completes the puzzle or puzzles associated with those section indicators. In another aspect of this

embodiment, a single puzzle including one or more components is associated with all of the section indicators in a game. Specifically, one or more of the components in the puzzle are associated with each of the section indicators. Therefore, the gaming device activates the section indicators based on the 5 specific component or components that are solved or completed by the player in the puzzle.

In a further embodiment, the sequences described above are employed in a persistence game. In this embodiment, the gaming device enables the player to pick symbols in one or more of the sequences in the game to 10 activate at least one of the section indicators in the game. Any symbols picked by the player remain displayed or indicated in the sequences for a designated number of games. Therefore, a player may complete a sequence in a single game or in a plurality of games. Similarly, one player may initially reveal some of the symbols in the sequences in one game and a subsequent 15 player or players may complete or solve one or more of the sequences in a subsequent game or games. It should be appreciated that the designated number of games may be randomly determined, predetermined, determined based on a wager by a player or according to any suitable determination method. It should also be appreciated that the picked symbols in the 20 sequences may remain revealed or displayed to the players until one or more of the sequences are completed.

Referring now to Fig. 8A, an alternative embodiment of the present invention is illustrated where the gaming device includes an award indicator or display 200 having a plurality of first award symbols 202a, 202b and 202c, 25 which are positioned near the top or upper portion of the award indicator 200, and a plurality of second award symbols 202d, 202e and 202f, which are positioned near the bottom or lower portion of the award indicator 200. The gaming device also includes, a plurality of activatable first symbol indicators 204a, 204b and 204c, which are positioned adjacent to and indicate one or 30 more of the first award symbols 202a, 202b and 202c, respectively, and a plurality of activatable second symbol indicators 204d, 204e and 204f which

are positioned adjacent to and indicate one or more of the second award symbols 202d, 202e and 202f, respectively.

In one embodiment of the present invention, the gaming device or player picks one of the first symbol indicators 204a, 204b and 204c and one of the symbol indicators 204d, 204e and 204f to indicate award symbols in the game. The selected first and second symbol indicators are illuminated, highlighted or otherwise activated and the gaming device then moves or rotates the award indicator 200. Once the award indicator or display 200 stops moving or rotating, the activated or highlighted symbol indicators indicate award symbols on the award indicator, which correspond to those indicators. The award or awards associated with the indicated award symbols 202 are combined (such as being summed or multiplied together) and provided to the player as a total award in the game.

In one embodiment, the award indicator or display 200 is in the form of a mechanical sphere or ball which is positioned inside a receptacle or opening 201 formed in a housing such as display device 32 where the award indicator 200 is rotatably connected to the housing. In one embodiment, the housing is attached to the top of the cabinet of the gaming device 10. In another embodiment, the housing is separate from the cabinet and viewable by the player. The award indicator 200 is positioned and connected to the cabinet so that there is enough space or clearance between the award indicator and the housing to enable the award indicator to rotate within the housing. The award indicator is also positioned so that at least a portion of the award indicator is viewable by a player. In one embodiment, the award indicator 200 rotates from the left to the right as shown by arrow 206. In another embodiment, the award indicator rotates from the right to the left. It should be appreciated that the award indicator may rotate in any suitable direction or combination of directions. In one embodiment, the shape and size of the award indicator 200 is based on the theme or themes associated with the gaming device. It should also be appreciated that the award indicator may be any suitable size or shape, or based on any suitable theme or themes associated with a game. In one embodiment, the award indicator 200 is manufactured using a durable

material such as suitable plastic. It should be appreciated that the award indicator may be manufactured using any suitable material.

In one embodiment, the award symbols 202a, 202b, 202c, 202d, 202e and 202f are separate symbols which are attached to the surface of the award indicator or display 200. In another embodiment, the award symbols are video symbols which are displayed on the award indicator. It should be appreciated that the award symbols 202 may be letters, numbers, characters, images or any suitable types of symbol or symbols. In this embodiment, the first and second award symbols 202a and 202b are laterally spaced apart on the award indicator to correspond with the lateral spacing of the symbol indicators 204. As shown in Fig. 8A, the first and second award symbols extend around the surface of the award indicator 200. It should be appreciated that one or a plurality of award symbols may be included on the award indicator. Additionally, it should be appreciated that the award symbols may be placed on one position or area of the award indicator or at any suitable position or positions on the award indicator.

In one embodiment, a plurality of first awards are associated with the first award symbols such as first award symbols 202a, 202b and 202c, and a plurality of second awards are associated with the plurality of second awards symbols such as 202d, 202e and 202f. In this embodiment, the awards are award values such as the values sixty-five, five and twenty or fifteen, one hundred and thirty. It should be appreciated that the awards may be values, prizes, modifiers, free spins, free games, game elements or any other suitable type of awards. In one embodiment, at least one of the first and second awards are the same. In another embodiment, a plurality of the first and second awards are the same. In a further embodiment, all of the first and second awards are the same. In another embodiment, all of the first and second awards are different.

In one embodiment, the first symbol indicators 204a, 204b and 204c are each in the form of an arrow which points generally downward towards the first award symbols 202a, 202b and 202c. It should be appreciated that the first symbol indicators may be any suitable size or shape or pointed in any

suitable direction to indicate the first award symbols on the award indicator. In one embodiment, the gaming device enables a player to pick at least one of the first symbol indicators 204a, 204b, and 204c to activate or highlight the picked first symbol indicator or indicators in a game. In one embodiment, the

5 gaming device enables the player to physically touch or press the symbol indicators to activate the symbol indicators in the game. In another embodiment, the gaming device includes at least one input or selector such as a button which enables the player to pick and activate one or more of the symbol indicators in the game. For example, when a player picks the first

10 symbol indicator 204b, the symbol indicator 204b is highlighted or otherwise illuminated to show that the symbol indicator was selected and activated in the game. The award indicator or display 200 is moved or rotated and the activated symbol indicator 204b indicates an award symbol 202b in the game. It should be appreciated that the symbol indicators may be randomly

15 activated, activated based on a wager by the player, activated when a player picks one of the symbol indicators or activated according to any suitable method.

In one embodiment, another set of activatable symbol indicators such as the second symbol indicators 204d, 204e and 204f are positioned near the

20 bottom or lower portion of the award indicator 200 and indicate one or more of the second award symbols 202d, 202e and 202f. In this embodiment, the second symbol indicators 204d, 204e and 204f are each in the form of arrows and point generally upward towards one of the first award symbols. It should be appreciated that the second symbol indicators may be any suitable size or

25 shape. Similar to the first symbol indicators described above, in one embodiment, the gaming device enables a player to pick one or more of the second symbol indicators 204d, 204e and 204f to activate or highlight the second symbol indicators and indicate one or more of the second award symbols. It should be appreciated that the player may touch the symbol

30 indicator, press one of a plurality of inputs associated with the symbol indicators or use any other suitable type of input or selector as described above to select and activate the second symbol indicators 204d, 204e and

204f. It should be also appreciated that any suitable number of first and/or second symbol indicators may be selected and activated in a game or games.

Additionally, in one embodiment, the gaming device includes a total award display 208 which indicates the total value of the award or awards 5 accumulated by the player in a game or games. It should be appreciated that the gaming device may include any suitable display or displays in a game.

Referring now to Fig. 8B, an example of the embodiment of Fig. 8A is illustrated. In this example, when the bonus game is triggered, the gaming device enables a player to pick and activate one of the first symbol indicators 10 204a, 204b and 204c and pick and activate one of the second symbol indicators 204d, 204e and 204f. The player picks first symbol indicator 204b and second symbol indicator 204f, which activates or highlights the selected first and second symbol indicators 204b and 204f in the game. The gaming device then spins or rotates the award indicator 200 in the direction shown by 15 arrow 206. Once the award indicator 200 stops spinning, the activated first and second symbol indicators 204b and 204f (i.e., the symbol indicators picked by the player) indicate one of the first award symbols 202a and one of the second award symbols 202b on the award indicator 200. Specifically, in this example, the activated first symbol indicator 204b indicates a first award 20 symbol 202b including an associated first award of seventy-five and the activated second symbol indicator 204f indicates a second award symbol 202f including an associated second award of one hundred. In this embodiment, the first and second awards of seventy-five and one hundred, respectively, which are associated with the indicated first and second award symbols, are 25 added or summed together to provide the player with a total award of one hundred seventy-five as indicated by the total award display 208.

In another embodiment, the first and second awards associated with the indicated first and second award symbols are modified and then provided to the player. For example, the first award of seventy-five is multiplied by the 30 second award of one hundred to provide the player with a total award of seven thousand five hundred for the game. It should be appreciated that the awards

associated with the indicated award symbols may be modified or otherwise combined in any suitable manner desired by the game implementor.

Referring now to Fig. 8C, another alternative embodiment of the present invention is illustrated where the embodiment of Fig. 8A further 5 includes a selection display 209 which enables a player to select and activate at least one of the first symbol indicators 204a, 204b and 204c and the second symbol indicators 204d, 204e and 204f. In this embodiment, the selection display 209 is a video display which includes a plurality of player selectable inputs such as a plurality of first inputs 212a, 212b and 212c in a plurality of 10 second inputs 212d, 212e and 212f. The gaming device enables a player to press or activate at least one of the first inputs and at least one of the second inputs to highlight a corresponding activator symbol 210a, 210b and 210c and a corresponding second activator symbol 210d, 210e and 210f. The highlighted or illuminated activator symbols activate the corresponding symbol 15 indicators 204a, 204b, 204c, 204d, 204e and 204f on the award indicator 200.

For example in Fig. 8C, the selection display 209 displays a plurality of first inputs such as the target symbols 212a, 212b and 212c and a plurality of second inputs such as the spaceships 212d, 212e and 212f. It should be appreciated that the inputs may be any suitable symbols or images, or 20 associated with any suitable theme or themes associated with a game. The player first picks one of the second inputs 212d, 212e or 212f to highlight or illuminate one of the corresponding second activators 210d, 210e and 210f. In this example, the player picks the second input 212e which highlights or illuminates the second activator 210e. Therefore, the corresponding symbol 25 indicator 204e is activated or highlighted on the award indicator 200 as shown in Fig. 8C. Next, the player picks one of the first inputs or target symbols 212a, 212b or 212c to highlight or illuminate one of the first activators 210a, 210b or 210c. In this example, the player picks target symbol 212a which highlights or illuminates first activator 210a. As a result, the corresponding 30 symbol indicator 204a is activated or highlighted on the award indicator 200. The gaming device then rotates or spins the award indicator 200 and the activated first symbol indicator indicates an award symbol 202a having an

award of fifty-five and the activated second symbol indicator 204e indicates an award symbol 202e having an award of thirty. The gaming device adds the first and second awards together to provide a total award of eighty-five to the player as indicated by the total award display 208. It should be appreciated
5 that any suitable inputs, buttons or other activation devices may be employed in a game to select one or more of the symbol indicators 204 on the award indicator 200 in the game.

Referring now to Fig. 9, a further alternative embodiment of the present invention is illustrated where the first and second award symbols include at
10 least one bonus symbol such as the target symbol 250. In this embodiment, each of the target symbols 250 is associated with at least one free spin or free activation of the award indicator in the game. Therefore, if the player picks one of the symbol indicators 204a, 204b, 204c, 204d, 204e or 204f which indicates one of the target symbols 250, the gaming device provides the player
15 with at least one free spin or free activation of the award indicator 200 in the game. This adds further excitement and enjoyment for the player because the player will obtain additional opportunities to obtain more awards in the game. It should be appreciated that the bonus symbols may be any suitable symbol or image desired by the game implementor. It also should be appreciated that
20 the first and second award symbols may include one or more bonus symbols in a game. It should further be appreciated that the bonus symbols may provide one or more free spins or activations of the award indicator in a game.

As shown in Fig. 9, the player picked and activated first symbol indicator 204a and second symbol indicator 204e which indicate a target symbol 250 and an award symbol having an award of one hundred. The gaming device provides the player with the award of one hundred as indicated by the total award display 208 and at least one free spin or activation of the award indicator in the game. As a result, the player obtains additional opportunities to obtain more awards in the game.
25

30 Referring now to Fig. 10, another alternative embodiment of the present invention is illustrated where the first symbol indicators 304a, 304b and 304c and the second symbol indicators 304d, 304e and 304f move relative to the

award indicator 300. In this embodiment, the award indicator 300 remains stationary while the first and second symbol indicators move or rotate from the left to the right as indicated by arrows 306a and 306b to indicate one or more of the first and second award symbols 302a, 302b, 302c and 302d, 302e and 5 302f, respectively, included on the award indicator. In another embodiment, the first and second symbol indicators rotate from the right to the left while the award indicator 300 remains stationary. In one embodiment, the first symbol indicators 304a, 304b and 304c move in the same direction as the second symbol indicators 304d, 304e and 304f. In another embodiment, the first 10 symbol indicators move in a different direction from the second symbol indicators. It should be appreciated that the first and second symbol indicators may move in the same direction, different directions or any suitable combination of directions as desired by the game implementor.

In one embodiment of the present invention, the gaming device or 15 player picks and activates one or more of the first symbol indicators 304a, 304b and 304c and one or more of the second symbol indicators 304d, 304e and 304f. The gaming device then rotates the symbol indicators relative to the award indicator. Once the symbol indicators stop moving or rotating, the activated first and second symbol indicators indicate corresponding first and 20 second award symbols on the award indicator 300. The first and second awards associated with the indicated first and second award symbols are summed, multiplied or otherwise modified as described above and provided to the player as a total award in the game. The total award is indicated by the total award display 308 as shown in Fig. 10.

25 Referring now to Fig. 11, a further alternative embodiment of the present invention is illustrated where the award indicator 400 includes a plurality of first award symbols 402a, 402b and 402c and a plurality of second award symbols 402d, 402e and 402f. In this embodiment, the first awards associated with the first award symbols are different from the second awards 30 associated with the second award symbols. As shown in Fig. 11, the first awards associated with the first awards symbols include values such as the values fifty, five and one hundred. The second awards associated with the

second awards symbols include modifiers such as multipliers of 3X, 1X and 5X. In one embodiment, at least one of the first and second awards associated with the first and second award symbols are the same. In another embodiment, a plurality of the first and second awards associated with the first and second award symbols are the same. In a further embodiment, all the first and second awards associated with the first and second award symbols are the same. In another embodiment, all of the first and second awards associated with the first and second award symbols are different. It should be appreciated that the first and second awards may include any suitable awards, prizes, free spins, free games, game elements or any other suitable types of awards.

Referring now to Fig. 12, another alternative embodiment of the present invention is illustrated where the gaming device includes a plurality of award indicators such as the award indicators 500 and 600. In this embodiment, the gaming device displays the two award indicators 500 and 600 to the player on the same housing such as display device 32. It should be appreciated that the award indicators 500 and 600 may be displayed on the same display device or housing or on different display devices or housings. The award indicators 500 and 600 are positioned in the openings 501 and 601 defined by the display device 32. The opening 501 and 601 are formed to allow enough clearance between the award indicators and the display device to enable the award indicators to move (i.e. rotate) within the display device. It should be appreciated that any suitable number of award indicators may be employed in a game. Additionally, the display devices may be connected or otherwise attached to the cabinet of the gaming device or separate display devices which are in communication with the processor in the gaming device.

As shown in Fig. 12, the first award indicator 500 includes a plurality of award symbols 502a, 502b and 502c and a plurality of activatable symbol indicators 504a, 504b and 504c which are positioned adjacent to the award symbols. Similarly, the second award indicator 600 includes a plurality of award symbols 602a, 602b and 602c and a plurality of activatable symbol indicators 604a, 604b and 604c. In one embodiment, the gaming device or

player selects and activates one of the symbol indicators 504 and one of the symbol indicators 604 to indicate one of the award symbols 502 and one of the award symbols 602, respectively, in a game. The award indicator 500 rotates from the left to the right as shown by arrow 506 and the award indicator 600 rotates from the left to the right as shown by arrow 606. In this embodiment, the award indicators 500 and 600 move or rotate in the same direction. It should be appreciated, however, that the award indicators may rotate in the same direction, different directions or any combination of directions as desired by the game implementor.

10 Additionally, different awards are associated with the award symbols 502 and 602. The awards associated with the award symbols 502 are values such as values seventy-five, fifty and ninety. The awards associated with the award symbols 602 are modifiers such as multipliers of 2X, 3X and 6X. In this embodiment, the gaming device or player selects and activates one of the symbol indicators 504 and 604 on the respective award indicators 500 and 600 in a game to indicate one of the award symbols 502 and one of the award symbols 602 in the game. The awards associated with the indicated award symbols on the award indicators 500 and 600 are combined and provided to the player as indicated by the total award display 508.

20 In one example, a player picks symbol indicators 504b and 604b to be activated in a game. The gaming device highlights or illuminates the activated symbol indicators on each of the award indicators. The gaming device then moves or spins the award indicators. When the award indicators stop spinning, the activated symbol indicators indicate an award symbol 502b having an associated award of fifty and an award indicator 602b having an award of 3X. The award of fifty is multiplied by the multiplier of 3X to provide the player with a total award of one hundred fifty as indicated by the total award display 508. It should be appreciated that the awards associated with the award symbols on the plurality of award indicators may be any suitable awards, prizes, modifiers, free spins, free games, game elements or any other suitable awards. Additionally, the awards associated with the indicated award symbols in a game may be combined in any suitable manner desired by the

game implementor as described above.

Referring to Fig. 13, in another alternative embodiment, the first and second award symbols can be related to each other in a game or games in any suitable manner desired by the game implementor. In the illustrated 5 example, an award indicator 700 including first and second award symbols 702a, 702b, 702c, 702d, 702e, 702f, 702g, 702h, 702i and 702j is displayed on a video display device such as display devices 30 or 32. Certain of the first and second award symbols are arranged or positioned on the award indicator 700 in this example such that the average expected award provided to the 10 player (i.e., the combination of the first and second awards associated with indicated first and second award symbols) is approximately the same in a game.

For example, as illustrated in Fig. 13, the average expected award or average total award provided to the player when the first award symbol 702c is 15 indicated in a game is seventy when a certain configuration on the award display occurs. Specifically, the first award associated with the first award symbol 702c is fifty. As shown by the dotted lines in Fig. 13, the first award symbol 702c may only be paired with one of the second award symbols 702g, 702h or 702i based on the fixed arrangement of the first and second award 20 symbols on the award indicator. Therefore, when the first award symbol 702c is indicated in a game, the gaming device either provides a total award of sixty (the sum of the awards associated with first award symbol 702c and the second award symbol 704g), a total award of seventy (the sum of the awards associated with first award symbol 702c and the second award symbol 704h) 25 or a total award of eighty (the sum of the awards associated with first award symbol 702c and the second award symbol 704i). Therefore, the average award or average total award provided to the player is seventy (i.e., [60+70+80]/3).

The average award or average total award provided to the player when 30 the first award symbol 702d is indicated in a game is different in this illustrated embodiment. Specifically, the first award associated with the first award symbol 702d is forty. As shown by the dotted lines in Fig. 13, the first award

symbol 702d may only be paired with one of the second award symbols 702g, 702h or 702i. Therefore, when the first award symbol 702d is indicated in a game, the gaming device either provides a total award of sixty (the sum of the awards associated with first award symbol 702d and the second award symbol 5 702h), a total award of seventy (the sum of the awards associated with first award symbol 702d and the second award symbol 702i) or a total award of fifty (the sum of the awards associated with first award symbol 702d and the second award symbol 702g). Therefore, the average award or average total award provided to the player when first award symbol 702d is indicated in the 10 game is sixty (i.e., $[60+70+50]/3$). This illustrates how the average expected values can differ in one embodiment. It should also be appreciated that the average expected value of each activator symbol indicator can be the same or can vary. It should further be appreciated that each award can have the same or a different probability of being indicated by each symbol indicator

15 In a further embodiment, the first and second award symbols are arranged on the award indicator so that the average expected award is different for one or more indications of the first and second award symbols in the game. For example, the first and second awards may be arranged on the award indicator so that all of the relatively larger awards are in one area of the 20 award indicator and all of the relatively smaller awards are positioned in another area of the award indicator. Thus, the average expected award based on two of the relatively larger awards is different than (i.e., greater than) the average expected award based on two of the relatively smaller awards. It should be appreciated that none, a plurality or all of the average expected 25 awards associated with the first and second awards of any indicated first and second award symbols arranged on the award indicator may be different.

While the present invention has been described in connection with what is presently considered to be the most practical and preferred embodiments, it is to be understood that the invention is not limited to the disclosed 30 embodiments, but on the contrary is intended to cover various modifications and equivalent arrangements included within the spirit and scope of the claims. It is thus to be understood that modifications and variations in the

present invention may be made without departing from the novel aspects of this invention as defined in the claims, and that this application is to be limited only by the scope of the claims.